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ABSTRACT

Forty parents volunteered to take part in a study of an education program for parents of Title I primary school students. Specifically, the study sought to determine if the program could improve the parents' attitudes toward their children, themselves, and the local school. The parents were equally divided into an experimental and a control group. The experimental group participated in three-hour workshops once a week for ten weeks. These workshops were devoted to topics related to both the cognitive and affective areas of learning. Specific topics included developing language abilities, self-control, self-concept, visual perception and discrimination, social skills and emotional stability, prereading skills, and reading skills. The control group also met in three-hour workshops once a week for ten weeks and were taught phonics and observed demonstrations of classroom reading instruction. Both groups were pretested and posttested using semantic differential scales to measure their attitudes toward themselves, their children, and their children's school. The results showed that while the attitudes of the two groups were not significantly different before the program, they were significantly so after the program--with the experimental group showing a positive change in attitude. (FL)

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ATTITUDINAL CHANGE THROUGH A PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Dolores Barnett

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Poverty, illiteracy and school dropouts are not new to American society. What is new is the vigorous Federal effort in the past two decades to meet these problems (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969). Beginning in the early 1960s, a number of laws struck at the country's social ills. None of these, however, attacked the broad educational problems of "poverty's children" (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969, p. 1).

The findings of a Presidential task force, presented to congressional committees, proved the need for a massive effort to expand experimental "compensatory education" programs to equalize educational opportunity (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969). In response to this need, the Presidential task force prepared the basic outline for legislation enacted as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, or Public Law 89-10 (Federal Register, 1965).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was signed into law on April 11, 1965, providing Federal Aid for educationally deprived children under Title II of Public Law 81-874. In January 1968, Congress

officially redesignated the enabling legislation as Title I, ESEA-Financial Assistance to Local Educational Agencies for the Education of Children of Low-Income Families (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1972). The purpose of the program was:

> To provide financial assistance . . . to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs . . . to meet the special educational needs of educationally deprived children (Public Law 89-750).

A comprehensive three-step needs assessment program was designed to determine the special educational needs of identified children (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1972). First, local school parents must list the basic skills areas in which they think there is a need for remedial instruction. Second, all local school classroom teachers must fill in needs assessment sheets for students who need remedial instruction and list the basic skills area or areas in which remediation is needed. Third, the latest available objective data (standardized test scores) must be placed on the needs assessment sheets and must verify that the students are below grade level in the basic skills areas listed by the teachers (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1972).

Although a school must have a concentration of low-income families to qualify for Title I funds, once a school does qualify, all children in the school whose achievement

levels are sufficiently below grade level are considered educationally deprived students and may participate in Title I instructional activities in the academic areas in which they qualify (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969). However, the majority of children in need of compensatory education are children of the economically disadvantaged (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969).

Periodic evaluations of the compensatory education program have prompted some policy changes. The most recent of these is a parent involvement emphasis (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978). Parent involvement in the decision-making process of the Title I program has been a requirement from the early years of the legislation. Each project area was required to select a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) with a majority of its members being parents of Title I pupils (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978).

Under the new legislation, the purpose of the Parent Advisory Council is basically the same with regard to decision making, but it must also function as a liaison between the school and the community (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978).

In the past two decades there has been an emphasis on building better home-school relationships in compensatory education programs (Gordon, 1974; Johnson, 1976). Educators

have realized that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Unfortunately, Schaefer (1972) found that most parents are undertrained as educators of children. This is true of parents from all economic and cultural backgrounds. There is evidence that parents influence not only the development of attitudes, interests, and opinions of their children, but also their intellectual and academic achievement (Schaefer, 1972; Gordon, 1974; Bell, 1972). Gordon (1974), in a field study of disadvantaged families, discovered that the schools which could involve parents in their children's education soon found their teachers making educational differences where they had "hitherto been ineffective" (p. 92).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research was to evaluate a program of parent education for parents of Title I primary school pupils. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Could this education program for parents of Title I primary school pupils improve the parents' attitudes toward the local school?

2. Could this education program for parents of Title I primary school pupils improve the parents' attitudes toward themselves as parents?

3. Could this education program for parents of Title I primary school pupils improve the parents' attitudes toward their children?

Significance of the Study

There is an increasing interest in parent involvement in compensatory education programs (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978). Deutsch (1965), however, found that many parents of the disadvantaged, themselves alienated from school at an early age, often had a distrust of schools. Research indicates that the attitudes of parents toward learning and schools are directly related to children's academic success. Gordon (1969) suggested that attitudes toward learning are generated primarily at home, and that the parents' self-esteem, attitudes toward school, expectations for their children's success, and provision of stimulating experiences have a profound influence on pupils' performances, attitudes, and self-esteem. Bronfenbrenner (1974) found that children achieve best when home and school share in the educational experience and parents themselves gain in self-esteem and develop feelings of competence when they see themselves able to teach their children.

Gordon (1974) concluded that most parents are good parents, interested and concerned about their children, and

have high hopes for them. Wolman and Levenson (1968) found that parental love and concern are not correlated simply with income.

> Given the opportunity to learn about educational goals and methods, provided with the chance to participate in and contribute to the planning of the school program, low-income parents . . . respond as fully as their circumstances permit to the tasks of the education of their children (p. 431).

Cohen (1964) pointed out that institutions cannot successfully fill the role of the family for America's children, but that institutions can help the family do its job more effectively by acknowledging the importance of and improving the quality of parent-child interaction. Gordon (1974) stated that there is evidence to support a cautious enthusiasm with regard to parent education programs. When parents become involved in a parent education program and see that others view them as an important influence in their children's lives and as human beings with ideas to contribute, their attitudes and behavior may change. These changes may include, among others, the parents' self-concepts, teaching behavior, and attitudes toward children, childrearing, and school.

In summary, authorities appear to agree that if the compensatory education programs are going to succeed in raising the reading achievement levels of disadvantaged children and in breaking the cycles of poverty, parents must be involved in the educational process.

Theoretical Framework

The importance of parent involvement in the education of their children is now acknowledged in the massive efforts aimed at teaching educationally disadvantaged children to read (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1978; Gordon, 1961; Schaefer, 1972; Bell, 1972). Although there is still a good deal of argument and debate, the evidence seems clear that a significant proportion of the difference in achievement levels of children in public schools is a function of non-school variables (Gordon, 1974). Educators must deal with the contribution of the home in an organized way. Certain assumptions concerning the parents of disadvantaged pupils were postulated and served as a basis for this investigation. The following five basic assumptions are believed to be existing conditions and were therefore considered relevant to this study:

1. Parents of some educationally disadvantaged pupils may have negative attitudes toward the local school because of alienation from school themselves (Deutsch, 1965; Gordon, 1974).

2. Parents of some educationally disadvantaged pupils may have low self-esteem because of their inability to teach their children reading skills (Gordon, 1968).

3. Parents of some educationally disadvantaged pupils may have low expectations for their children's success in school (Gordon, 1967; Johnson, 1976).

4. Parents' attitudes are developed by the influence of life experiences upon them and negative attitudes resulting from negative experiences can be replaced by positive attitudes resulting from positive experiences (Cohen, 1964).

5. Parents of some educationally disadvantaged pupils, if offered an opportunity to do so, can grow and learn new ways to work with their children which will help them in school (Gordon, 1968; Johnson, 1976).

Delimitation of the Study

This study was limited to 40 volunteers from a population of 109 parents of Title I reading pupils. The subjects volunteered at a meeting held in the fall of 1979 for parents of Title I reading pupils enrolled in grades one and two in Batesville Elementary School, Batesville, Mississippi.

Design of the Study

Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957), in a quantitative study of meaning, developed a semantic differential technique for measuring attitude. The technique consists essentially of a number of seven-point rating scales that are bipolar with each extreme defined by an adjective. The space between the adjectives is semantic space. A concept or idea may be judged against a series of scales. Each judgment represents

a selection among a set of given alternatives and localizes the concept at a point in semantic space. It is possible to submit sets of such rating to factor analysis in a search for the basic dimensions of meaning. Osgood and his colleagues (1957) have shown the importance of three major factors in the measurement of meaning. They are evaluation, potency, and activity.

A 12-item semantic differential was used to gather data for the study. Four items were chosen from each of the three major categories (Osgood et al., 1957). Volunteers (20 in the control group and 20 in the experimental group) were asked to judge three concepts against identical sets of scales as they began the program and again at its conclusion. The three concepts were (1) themselves as parents, (2) their children, and (3) the local school.

Both the control group and the experimental group attended a three-hour workshop each week for 10 consecutive weeks. Parents in the experimental group participated in an education program structured around the cognitive and affective areas of learning while parents in the control group observed demonstrations of reading instruction and were taught a phonics course.

Research Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were examined in this investigation. They are stated below in the null form.

Hypothesis I

There will be no significant difference in the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group toward the local school in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity.

Hypothesis II

There will be no significant difference in the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group toward themselves as parents in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity.

Hypothesis III

There will no significant difference in the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group toward their children in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity.

The criterion for rejection of a null hypothesis, and therefore acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, was the .05 level of significance.

Disadvantaged Children and Achievement

A number of research studies (Coleman, 1968; Miller, 1971; Cohen & Goss, 1968; Deutsch, 1967; Pasamanick & Knoblock, 1955) have examined the relationship between academic achievement and various physical, psychological, educational, and socioeconomic factors. There is general agreement that children's achievement is affected by a number of factors rather than any one single factor.

Attitudes

Calvin (1976) administered a 28-item questionnaire to 30 students enrolled in a compensatory education program in Texas. The questionnaire assessed attitudes toward professors, administrators, and peers, toward the relevance of school and program services. Results indicated a positive relationship between attitudes and school performance. Those groups of students showing negative attitudes were those who failed to attend classes and avoided administrators and who did not use the services offered by the school.

Miller (1971) measured first-grade children's attitudes toward reading before the beginning of reading instruction and at the end of the first-grade year. While there was no significant relationship between attitudes toward reading and achievement prior to reading instruction, the correlation between achievement and attitude after instruction was significant beyond the .001 level of confidence. There was also a highly significant relationship between reading achievement and a positive change in attitude from pre to posttesting.

Carver (1971) compared the effectiveness of four different methods of reading instruction with 32 seven-year-old children who were severely retarded in reading. The total improvement in reading of all four groups was similar. He concluded that the reading gains were not due to methods but to changes in the children's attitudes and motivation produced by success and teacher approval in all four programs.

Kilhane (1972) developed an attitude assessment instrument adapted to the reading levels of high school students in compensatory education programs. The 30-item instrument was

administered to high school students in compensatory education programs in selected schools in Southeastern Texas. Results revealed that, for each of three factors--social participation, perception of teachers, and self as student--the lowest mean score was obtained by the students who later dropped out of school.

Simpson (1977) studied 94 pupils in three schools in Georgia to determine the relationships among attitudes toward reading, attitudes toward self, and reading achievement. She found that reading achievement was significantly related to attitude toward self, but not toward reading.

Environment

Among the environmental factors affecting children's intellectual growth are socioeconomic class, parental education and marital status, number of siblings, the amount of prior education and grade level. Studies (Blank, 1969; Horton & Crump, 1962; John, 1972; Levenstein, 1970) have shown that intelligence increased with rising socioeconomic status of the individual or the family.

Evidence that children's learning, achievement, and emotional problems are more related to family environment than to socioeconomic status was also reported by Douglas (1964) and Moore (1969). Results of an experimental study

led them to conclude that many more children have problems attributed to the effects of a poor environment than to the effects of serious prenatal stress. Relations between prenatal stress and children's competence decreased with age but relations between environmental factors and competence increased with age. At 20 months of age only a four-point difference in IQ was found between children from the least and most favored environments, but at 10 years of age, a 20-point difference was found between children who received the least and most educational stimulation in the home.

Several environmental differences between middle-class and working-class white families have been found to exist. Tuflin and Kagan (1972) collected data from 30 middle-class and 26 working-class white mothers. Each mother was observed at home with her ten-month-old baby girl. In the working-class children's environment, there was more "extraneous noise;" the infants had less opportunity to explore and manipulate their environment, and they had fewer toys.

Evidence that low intelligence test scores were not only generated but maintained by adverse environments of neglect was reported by Skodak and Skeels (1945) in a follow-up study

of adopted children. Control children remained in unstimulating and, in some cases, actively adverse orphanages or state schools for the mentally retarded. The transfer to adoptive homes for the experimental group took place around an average age of three and a half years. As adults, very marked differences in factors of the experimental group were found in educational and occupational status and in general life style.

Werner, Bierman, and French (1971) investigated the effects of socioeconomic status, educational stimulation, and emotional support upon achievement problems, learning problems, and emotional difficulties of children. Socioeconomic status, educational stimulation, and emotional support showed moderate intercorrelations ranging from .37 to .57. These were all significantly related to school achievement and learning problems.

Population for the Study

On September 11, 1979, a meeting was held for parents of Title I reading pupils in grades one and two at Batesville Elementary School. Of the 109 parents present, 47 parents volunteered to participate in the study. Seven were eliminated because both parents in a family had volunteered. Only one parent per child was allowed to participate in the

study although both parents were allowed to attend the workshops.

Using a table of random numbers, the 40 subjects were divided into two groups of 20 parents each. The experimental group consisted of 17 mothers and three fathers, and the control group consisted of 18 mothers and two fathers.

Experimental Group Program

The experimental group met each Tuesday evening for three hours beginning in September, 1979, and continued for ten consecutive weeks. Emphasis throughout the program was on making parents more responsive to the individuality of the child. This was in accordance with Gordon'a (1976) statement: "Effective parenting requires an understanding by the parents of the child's own activity rate, sensitivity to the environment, moods, bio-rhythms, alertness, and the like" (p. 78).

Materials used in the workshops were developed by Ruth Bowdoin. They were published by Webster's International Publishing Company, Inc. (see Appendix A).

The format for each three-hour workshop was essentially the same. The first 75-minute session was devoted to the cognitive areas of learning. Following a 30-minute break, the remaining 75-minute session was devoted to the affective areas of learning.

Workshop 1, Session 1

Developing Language Abilities. Parents marked semantic differential instruments to be used for evaluating the program's effectiveness in changing negative attitudes to positive attitudes.

Workshop 1, Session 2

Developing Language Abilities. The investigator showed parents a filmstrip, "How Your Child Learns." Following the viewing of the filmstrip, copies of a book entitled How Your Child Learns were distributed. The readability level of the books in the series was controlled (see Appendix B). The investigator reviewed the book briefly with parents emphasizing the five senses used by children in learning.

The follow-up activity was a "dart game" which was played with an old dart board covered with paper. Printed on the paper were the major ways of learning that were discussed in How Your Child Learns. One star had been placed on some words, two stars on some, and three stars on a few. If the dart landed outside the circle, no points were given; if it hit a word with one star, five points were given; two stars, 10 points; and three stars, 15 points. Two teams of ten parents each competed in the game. The investigator kept score and read aloud the words printed on the board as each player scored.

Workshop 2, Session 1

Developing Language Abilities. A filmstrip, "Parents Are Teachers," gave parents specific suggestions for employing household objects in building a child's word understandings and other skills and awareness necessary for reading. Following the viewing of the filmstrip, the investigator distributed copies of a book entitled Parents Are Teachers and guided parents in skimming the book.

The follow-up activity was a "contest among tables," which involved four tables with five parents at each table. A box had been placed on each table and in each box was a different object. Parents were instructed to select a person in their group to be table chairman. Participants were given three minutes to name all the word meanings they could teach from the object at their table. Each chairman listed the words named and read them aloud at the end of the allotted time. Prizes were given to members of the winning team.

Workshop 2, Session 2

Self-Control. A filmstrip, "Instead of Nagging," showed parents how to help their children develop self-control without building negative feelings. Following the viewing of the filmstrip, volunteers told at least one idea that might be used to develop self-control without building bad feelings. Following the discussion, copies of a book entitled Instead

of Nagging were distributed and studied in the group for about five minutes.

The follow-up activity was a "traffic light" game in which parents heard a short case study of a child and when the study was finished they said "GO" if they thought the child needed no help and things were fine; "CAUTION" if the child should be treated with care; and "STOP" if something really needed to be done quickly to help the child.

Workshop 3, Session 1

Developing Language Abilities. The investigator reviewed the materials covered in the previous workshop on developing language abilities. Follow-up activities were: (1) role playing of "Parent and the Sandwich" and of "Parent and Potatoes." Both dramatizations were followed by a discussion of positive and negative points in each parent's behavior; and (2) a picture-reading workshop in which parents learned how to teach their children to read pictures.

Workshop 3, Session 2

Developing Self-Control. The investigator reviewed materials covered in the previous workshop on self-control. Follow-up activities included (1) role playing of "preventing problems," in which one parent played the bad role of Mrs. Wolf and Suzie, and the other parent played the good role of Mrs. Love and Barbara; and (2) a child-o game which is

played like bingo. There are four forms of the game and each lesson suggested an appropriate form (see Appendix C).

Workshop 4, Session 1

Developing Language Abilities. A filmstrip, "Thousands and Thousands of Words," was shown to parents and a discussion of ways they could help their children learn the meanings of words followed. Copies of a book entitled Thousands and Thousands of Words were distributed and parents were asked to take the book home, read it all, and share it with other adult family members or friends. The follow-up activity was a "counting words" activity in which parents were given a book and asked to count the words throughout the book. The investigator pointed out to parents how many word meanings a child would be exposed to if his parents read these books to him.

Workshop 4, Session 2

Developing Self-Concept. A filmstrip, "My Mommy Likes Me," presented a child's eight basic needs and how one mother met these needs. A discussion of the eight basic needs followed the viewing of the filmstrip and then the investigator gave each parent a copy of a book entitled My Mommy Likes Me. The follow-up activity was "teaching love with valentine hearts" in which parents were given hearts cut from construction paper. Printed on the hearts were things like,

"I show my love when I help my child have more successes than failures." Parents read these statements aloud to the group.

Workshop 5, Session 1

Developing Language Abilities. The investigator showed parents a tote bag and demonstrated some of the ways it could be used for developing language abilities in their children. Parents were then provided with tote bags in which they placed books, pictures, scissors, a small chalkboard, and chalk. Role playing followed in which parents volunteered ways they would use the tote bag for developing language abilities in their children.

Workshop 5, Session 2

Developing Self-Concept. Activities were: (1) "feeding your child vitamins" in which parents drew one of the eight large capsules from a medicine bottle and read the name of a vitamin necessary for good emotional health. The vitamins were love, acceptance, respect, security, control, confidence, guidance, and independence; and (2) a child-o game (see Appendix C).

Workshop 6, Session 1

Developing Visual Perception and Discrimination. A filmstrip, "How Things Look," showed parents six specific things they could teach their children. They were: body parts, colors, shapes, number meanings, alphabet, and most

important of all, that learning is fun. Copies of a book entitled How Things Look were distributed and parents were asked to take them home and read them to their children over and over again.

Follow-up activities were: (1) a demonstration by the investigator of how parents might chant and tap body parts, such as shoulders, as they read the first chapter of How Things Look aloud to their children; and (2) a demonstration by the investigator of ways parents could use a black crayon to draw simple figures on paper leaving out certain parts to see if the child could tell what was missing.

Workshop 6, Session 2

Acquiring Social Skills and Emotional Stability. A filmstrip, "The importance of Good Feelings," showed parents that the feelings a child has about himself and about others around him both help to form his emotional make-up and have a direct bearing upon his learning at home and in school. After viewing the filmstrip, books entitled The Importance of Good Feelings were distributed and parents were asked to browse through the books and find other ways of developing good feelings.

The follow-up activity was "underneath the security blanket" in which a home was constructed by spreading a blanket over the backs of four chairs. A picture of a home, drawn in outline and labeled "A Happy Home," was pinned on

the top side of the blanket. Underneath the blanket were large cardboard human forms (parents). Written on each form were statements such as, "I try to have patience." As the investigator called parents' names, they reached underneath the blanket and drew a shape. The investigator read the statements aloud and the parent forms were displayed around the room.

Workshop 7, Session 1

Developing Visual Perception and Discrimination. The investigator reviewed the information presented during the previous week's workshop, and then parents participated in a construction jamboree. Materials were provided for the construction of "feely bags." Inside paper sacks parents placed two circles, squares, triangles, hearts, and rectangles which they had cut from cardboard. The investigator demonstrated how they could place one of each of the shapes on a table and ask the child to find another one like it.

Workshop 7, Session 2

Acquiring Social Skills and Emotional Stability. Activities were: (1) "draw a happy word" in which happy words such as, "I like the way you tried," were printed on strips of paper. The strips were turned upside down on a table. Each parent drew a slip and read it aloud. The group discussed each happy word as it was drawn and read; and (2) a child-o game (see Appendix C).

Workshop 8, Session 1

Developing Prereading Skills. A filmstrip, "Getting Ready for Reading," presented exercises which contribute to the development of many of the major prereading skills necessary for success in beginning reading. Copies of a book entitled Getting Ready for Reading were distributed. Using posters, the investigator discussed each chapter of the book.

The follow-up activity was a relay contest between two teams of ten parents each. Identical items such as a toothbrush, a washcloth, silverware, etc. were placed in two paper sacks. On each end of a table was a cereal bowl, a sheet of paper, a placemat, a fruitbowl, and a washcloth. Contestants ran to the table, took an object from the sack without looking, and placed it by the thing that belonged to it.

Workshop 8, Session 2

Developing Self-Concept. Activities were: (1) role playing of "mother and child with book" and "developing readiness through play." A discussion of positive and negative aspects of the parent's actions followed each dramatization; and (2) a child-o game (see Appendix C).

Workshop 9, Session 1

Developing Reading Skills. A filmstrip, "Help Your Child Read Better," stressed to parents that one of the possible causes of failure in reading is a low value placed on reading in the home. The filmstrip also reminded parents

that reading is considered the most complex skill children develop. Before showing the filmstrip, the investigator asked parents to listen for things to do and things not to do in helping their child master the reading skills. After discussion of the filmstrip, the investigator gave each parent a copy of a book entitled Help Your Child Read Better and briefly reviewed various parts of the book. Parents were asked to read the book thoroughly at home.

A follow-up activity involved role playing of three situations followed by a discussion of each. The first situation involved a child whose parents made him read immediately after he got home from school. The child did not want to do so, but the mother just said, "Read. The teacher said for you to read 30 minutes because you are behind." In the second situation, the mother had her child read aloud and try to figure out every word he didn't know. Then she said something about the book being "little" and asked which book his friend was in. In the third situation, the parent told the child to cut off the television when the program was over because it would be time for reading. The mother was enthusiastic about the book and said she wanted to hear about it after the child had finished reading it silently.

Workshop 9, Session 2

Developing Self-Concept. A filmstrip, "Words That Win Children," required parents to listen for words they would

like to remember in dealing with their child. Following the viewing of the filmstrip, copies of a book entitled Words That Win Children were distributed.

The follow-up activity was a book drill, "who can find it first?" Using a copy of the book Words That Win Children, parents were asked to find the pages that told what to do when certain types of behavior occurred. (e.g., The child will not share.)

Workshop 10, Session 1

Review. The investigator led parents in a discussion and review of material covered during the entire workshop. The follow-up activity was a child-o game (see Appendix C).

Control Group Program

The control group met on Thursday evening for three hours beginning in September, 1979, and continued for ten consecutive weeks. Parents in this group were taught a phonics course by the investigator and observed demontrations of classroom reading instruction by a first-grade and a fifth-grade teacher.

Workshop 1, Session 1

Parents marked semantic differential instruments to be used for evaluation of the program's effectiveness in changing negative attitudes to positive attitudes.

Workshop 1, Session 2

The investigator asked parents if they would like to be taught phonics in the ensuing workshops. They voted unanimously for a phonics class in which they would be taught phonics as beginners. None of them remembered having been exposed to phonics when they were in school. Following the opening discussion, copies of a book entitled Enjoy Your Child were distributed and discussed. These books were written by two parents, Jack E. Conner and Frank J. Sanders and published by Educational Planning and Product Development Company, 1976.

Workshop 2, Session 1

The investigator began the first phonics class by teaching single consonant sounds with only one sound in the initial position followed by the same consonant sounds in the final position (b, h, j, l. m, p, t, and v).

Workshop 2, Session 2

Parents participated in oral drill of consonant sounds in initial and final positions. Then they filled in mimeographed sheets for written practice and reinforcement.

Workshop 3, Session 1

Parents were instructed in the sounds of single consonants in the medial position. Oral and written practice followed the instruction.

Workshop 3, Session 2

A filmstrip, "Consonant Digraphs," introduced consonant digraphs, sh, ch, th, ph, gh, and ng to parents. Following the viewing of the filmstrip, parents took turns identifying consonant digraphs in a list of words on the chalkboard. Mimeographed sheets on consonant digraphs provided written practice.

Workshop 4, Session 1

A cassette tape program introduced to parents consonant blends bl, br, cl, cr, dr, dw, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl, pr, sc, sk, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, tr, and tw. Individual leaflets accompanying the tape program provided written practice. Answers were checked orally by the investigator.

Workshop 4, Session 2

A cassette tape program introduced long vowel sounds to parents. Individual leaflets accompanying the tape program provided written practice. The group was taught how to play "hang man" during the remainder of session 2. Using the chalkboard, the investigator made a mark for each letter of a word (e.g., _____ night). Parents took turns guessing the letters. Each time a letter was missed, a part of the gallows was built. When ten letters were missed, the gallows was complete, the man was hung, and the parents lost the game. The investigator then wrote the correct word on the chalkboard for reinforcement.

Workshop 5, Session 1

Key words for each short vowel sound had been written on the chalkboard. Parents read these words aloud in unison. Dictionaries were distributed and the investigator explained diacritical marks for both long and short vowel sounds. The "schwa" sound was also discussed. Parents then used the pronounciation key as they pronounced words which had been selected by the investigator.

Workshop 5, Session 2

Word pronounciation practice using the dictionaries continued upon request of the parents. Toward the end of the session, parents went to the chalkboard and as the investigator called out word families such as "at," they listed as many family members as they could. Their responses were timed and prizes were given to the winners.

Workshop 6, Session 1

Vowel digraphs and diphthongs were discussed briefly. The silent e pattern was taught and a list of words on the chalkboard provided follow-up practice.

Workshop 6, Session 2

A list of rules governing long and short vowels was given to each parent. The investigator read over the list with parents explaining and giving examples of each rule.

Parents took turns trying to pronounce nonsense words from the chalkboard using the rules they had learned.

Workshop 7, Session 1

The investigator conducted a review of the material covered in the phonics course. The review was an oral question and answer session.

Workshop 7, Session 2

Parents took a written test on the material reviewed in session 1. Answer keys were distributed and parents checked their own papers.

Workshop 8, Session 1

A Batesville Elementary first-grade teacher presented a demonstration of first-grade phonics instruction. She used a variety of materials including "alphabet soup," filmstrips, and other media from A Vowel Sounds Learning Module purchased from the Singer Company.

Workshop 8, Session 2

A Batesville Elementary second-grade teacher presented a demonstration on teaching reading comprehension skills to second graders. She used the second grade Houghton-Mifflin Basal Reading Materials and followed the outline suggested in the teaching guide.

Workshop 9, Session 1

The school reading program was presented by a panel of school staff members. The Title I guidance counselor explained the selection of Title I pupils. The Title I school nurse explained health services for Title I pupils, and the Batesville Elementary School principal described the coordination of district and Title I reading programs.

Workshop 9, Session 2

This session involved a follow-up question and answer period. Some of the questions parents asked were: "What can we do to help our children do better in school?" "Why don't teachers show more interest in making children learn?" "Why is there no Parent-Teacher Association in this school?"

Workshop 10, Session 1

The investigator distributed copies of a book entitled Primer for Parents written by Paul McKee and William K. Durr and published by the Houghton-Mifflin Company. The book, which explained the learning-to-read process, was the highlight of the class discussion.

Following the discussion copies of another book, Your Child and Reading, were distributed. It suggested ways parents could help their children learn to read better. This book also was published by the Houghton Mifflin-Company.

Instrumentation

The instrument selected for assessing parents' attitudes was constructed in accordance with the research conducted by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957). The factors which they found to be most significant in assessing attitudes were evaluation, potency, and activity. Four pairs of terms related to each of these factors were selected. This was consistent with research reviewed by Heise (1969) in which he found that only three or four adjective pairs for each factor worked very well. The resulting 12 pairs of terms were organized into a semantic differential scale by randomly reversing the polarity of four of the items and assigning each of the pairs a random position within the instrument. Identical semantic differential instruments were used to rate each of three concepts: child's school (see Figure 1), child (see Figure 2), and yourself as a parent (see Figure 3).

The semantic differential is one of the most widely used attitude measurement tools available (Vidali, 1976; Sherwood, 1975, Finstuen, 1977; Mordkoff, 1963; Hughes, 1967). Vidali (1976), in a study involving 300 selected college students, found that the semantic differential "is extraordinarily robust in a variety of situations likely to be incurred in practice" (p. 85). Osgood et al. (1957) found the test-retest reliability of a random sample of polar items to be .85 (p. 127). Hughes (1967), using a test-retest method, found

the reliability to be .58. After extensive work with the semantic differential, Osgood (1957) stated that "We have found no reasons to question the validity of the instrument on the basis of its correspondence with the results to be expected from common sense" (p. 141).

Kerlinger (1970) wrote that the semantic differential could be applied to a variety of research problems. Heise (1969), after reviewing literature on the semantic differential, stated that:

> There is probably no social, psychological principle that has received such resounding cross-group and cross-cultural verification as the EPA [evaluation, potency, activity] structure of semantic differential ratings (p. 421).

Carroll (1959), following his review said, "It is good, it is active, it is potent" (p. 57).

Finstuen (1977) conducted research designed to demonstrate the heuristic value of Osgood's semantic differential method for assessing the psychological meaning of concepts and attitudes. Using citations listed in psychological abstracts, semantic differential frequencies for 75 articles were tallied. Articles were extracted on an annual basis from 1952 through 1976. Employing a classification scheme based on types of research, the semantic differential studies identified were further analyzed by content-domain areas. Overall, the report suggested that "it is reasonable to assume that the semantic differential will remain a viable measurement tool" (p. 8).

Below are 12 items with a seven-blank rating scale between each item. The middle blank means the item does not apply. The blanks closest to the words (as in number 1) mean "very fair" or "very unfair." The blanks second from each end mean "somewhat fair" or "somewhat unfair." The blanks third from each end mean "a little fair" or "a little unfair."

Please rate your child's school. Place an X in the blank that you think best describes your child's school.

	Very	Some What	Just a Little	Does Not Apply	Just a Little	Some What	Very	
Fair	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unfair
Unfriendly	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Friendly
Intelligent	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Stupid
Active	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Passive
Lazy	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Energetic
Dull	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Sharp
Pleasant	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unpleasant
Weak	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Strong
Flexible	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Rigid
Stable	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unstable
Interesting	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Boring
Organized	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unorganized

Figure 1

Semantic Differential

Below are 12 items with a seven-blank rating scale between each item. The middle blank means the item does not apply. The blanks closest to the words (as in number 1) mean "very fair" or "very unfair." The blanks second from each end mean "somewhat fair" or "somewhat unfair." The blanks third from each end mean "a little fair" or "a little unfair."

Please rate your child. Place an X in the blank that you think best describes your child.

	Very	Some What	Just a Little	Does Not Apply	Just a Little	Some What	Very	
Fair	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unfair
Unfriendly	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Friendly
Intelligent	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Stupid
Active	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Passive
Lazy	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Energetic
Dull	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Sharp
Pleasant	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unpleasant
Weak	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Strong
Flexible	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Rigid
Stable	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unstable
Interesting	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Boring
Organized	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unorganized

Figure 2

Semantic Differential

Below are 12 items with a seven-blank rating scale between each item. The middle blank means the item does not apply. The blanks closest to the words (as in number 1) mean "very fair" or "very unfair." The blanks second from each end mean "somewhat fair" or "somewhat unfair." The blanks third from each end mean "a little fair" or "a little unfair."

Please rate yourself as a parent. Place an X in the blank that you think best describes yourself as a parent.

	Very	Some What	Just a Little	Does not Apply	Just a Little	Some What	Very	
Fair	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unfair
Unfriendly	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Friendly
Intelligent	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Stupid
Active	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Passive
Lazy	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Energetic
Dull	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Sharp
Pleasant	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unpleasant
Weak	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Strong
Flexible	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Rigid
Stable	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unstable
Interesting	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Boring
Organized	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	Unorganized

Figure 3

Semantic Differential

Data Collection

During the first workshop session, parents in both the control and experimental groups were asked to rate three concepts. The concepts were to be rated on identical semantic differential scales. The concepts were (1) themselves as parents, (2) their child, and (3) their child's school. Subjects were given only one concept at a time to mark. The investigator waited at the front of the room and when everyone had finished marking, subjects were asked to turn the sheets face down and pass them to the front of the room. After the first concept was collected, the next concept was passed out and the process was repeated until all the instruments assessing the three concepts had been marked.

The investigator computed a mean for the four pairs of terms under each of the three factors: evaluation, potency, and activity on each concept. All scales were checked a second time to eliminate errors.

Data Processing

The *t* test was selected for the analysis of the data. According to Siegel (1956), it is the usual parametric technique for analyzing data from two independent samples. The *t* test, because it uses means and other statistics arrived at by arithmetical computation, requires that observations be measured "on at least an interval scale" (p. 96). Kerlinger

(1970), in discussing the four types of measurement and their accompanying scales, stated that "though most psychological scales are basically ordinal, we can with considerable assurance often assume equality of interval" (p. 440). He further stated that much useful information has been obtained through interpretation of ordinal data to which statistical analyses suitable for interval measurement has been applied.

The control and experimental groups were compared on three factors (evaluation, potency, and activity) on three different concepts. The groups were compared before treatment to determine whether subjects were drawn from the same population and again after treatment to evaluate the effectiveness of the parent education program in changing parents' attitudes. Pretest-posttest scores of each group were compared to determine the amount and direction of attitude change. Data for each of the three concepts were analyzed separately.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The responses obtained from the subjects on the semantic differential instruments were tabulated on a seven-point semantic scale. A mean was computed for each of the three factors (evaluation, potency, and activity) on each of the three concepts (child's school, yourself as a parent, and child). The *t* test was used to test three null hypotheses, with significance at $p < .05$ required for rejection.

Hypothesis I

There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group toward the local school in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity.

Hypothesis II

There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group toward themselves as parents in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity.

Hypothesis III

There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group

toward their children in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity.

The Population Sample

The control and experimental groups were compared before treatment to determine if subjects were drawn from the same population. Data obtained through the comparison of the two groups on the concept "child's school" before treatment are shown in Table 13. There was no significant difference on any of the factors. However, the control group scored higher than the experimental group on the evaluation and potency factors.

A comparison of the two groups before treatment on the concept "yourself as a parent" yielded the data shown in Table 14. There was no significant difference on any of the factors. The control group scored higher than the experimental group on the evaluation factor.

Data obtained in comparison of the two groups before treatment on the concept "child" are shown in Table 15. There is no significant difference on any of the factors. The control group again scored higher than the experimental group on the evaluation and potency factors.

The control and experimental groups were compared following the treatment. Data obtained in comparison of two

Table 13

Comparison of the Control and Experimental Groups Before Treatment on the Concept "Child's School"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail Probability
Evaluation	Control Group before treatment	20	4.475	-0.52	19	0.612
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	4.230			
Potency	Control Group before treatment	20	4.405	0.59	19	0.562
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	4.070			
Activity	Control Group before treatment	20	4.310	-0.07	19	0.943
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	4.340			

Table 14

Comparison of the Control and Experimental Groups Before Treatment on the Concept "Yourself as a Parent"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t Value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Control Group before treatment	20	3.695	0.52	19	0.612
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	3.635			
Potency	Control Group before treatment	20	3.610	0.59	19	0.562
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	3.630			
Activity	Control Group before treatment	20	3.000	-0.12	19	0.906
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	3.030			

Table 15

Comparison of the Control and Experimental Groups Before Treatment on the Concept "Child"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Control Group before treatment	20	4.200	0.21	19	0.834
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	4.175			
Potency	Control Group before treatment	20	3.195	1.60	19	0.127
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	2.830			
Activity	Control Group before treatment	20	2.530	-0.39	19	0.703
	Experimental Group before treatment	20	2.635			

groups on the concept "child's school" after treatment are shown in Table 16. There was significant difference at the .001 level. In each case, the results favored the experimental group.

Table 16

Comparison of the Control and Experimental Groups After Treatment on the Concept "Child's School"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Control Group after treatment	20	4.615	-7.41	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.915			
Potency	Control Group after treatment	20	4.210	-7.46	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.815			
Activity	Control Group after treatment	20	4.340	-9.07	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.815			

Data obtained in comparison of the control and experimental groups on the concept "yourself as a parent" after treatment are shown in Table 17. There was significant difference between the two groups on all factors at the .001 level. The experimental group scored considerably higher on all three measures.

Table 17

Comparison of the Control and Experimental Groups After Treatment on the Concept "Yourself as a Parent"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Control Group after treatment	20	3.715	-11.55	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.190			
Potency	Control Group after treatment	20	3.730	-10.24	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.205			
Activity	Control Group after treatment	20	3.190	-16.24	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	5.990			

A comparison of the two groups on the concept "child" after treatment are shown in Table 18. There was significant difference between the two groups favoring the experimental group on all factors at the .001 level.

Table 18

Comparison of the Control and Experimental Groups After Treatment on the Concept "Child"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Control Group after treatment	20	4.405	-13.87	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.390			
Potency	Control Group after treatment	20	3.385	-9.22	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	5.550			
Activity	Control Group after treatment	20	2.700	-10.49	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	5.570			

A comparison was made of the control group before and after treatment. Data from this comparison on the concept "child's school" are shown in Table 19. There was no significant difference on any of the factors.

Table 19

Comparison of the Control Group Before and After Treatment on the Concept "Child's School"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Control Group before treatment	20	4.475	-1.45	19	0.163
	Control Group after treatment	20	4.615			
Potency	Control Group before treatment	20	4.405	0.58	19	0.572
	Control Group after treatment	20	4.210			
Activity	Control Group before treatment	20	4.310	-0.11	19	0.915
	Control Group after treatment	20	4.340			

Data obtained from comparison of the control group on the concept "yourself as a parent" before and after treatment are shown in Table 20. There was no significant difference on any of the factors.

Table 20

Comparison of the Control Group Before and After Treatment on the Concept "Yourself as a Parent"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Control Group before treatment	20	3.695	-0.10	19	0.918
	Control Group after treatment	20	3.715			
Potency	Control Group before treatment	20	3.610	-0.34	19	0.739
	Control Group after treatment	20	3.730			
Activity	Control Group before treatment	20	3.000	-0.63	19	0.534
	Control Group after treatment	20	3.190			

Data obtained from a comparison of the control group scores on the concept "child" were compared before and after treatment. Data from this comparison are shown in Table 21. There was no significant difference on any of the factors.

Table 21

Comparison of the Control Group Before and After Treatment on the Concept "Child"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Control Group before treatment	20	4.200	-1.96	19	0.065
	Control Group after treatment	20	4.405			
Potency	Control Group before treatment	20	3.195	-1.26	19	0.219
	Control Group after treatment	20	3.385			
Activity	Control Group before treatment	20	2.530	-0.81	19	0.430
	Control Group after treatment	20	2.700			

A comparison was made of the experimental group before and after treatment. Data from this comparison on the concept "child's school" as shown in Table 22. There was a significant difference at the .001 level on all three factors. In all three measures, there was a significant gain between pretest and posttest.

Table 22

Comparison of the Experimental Group Before and After Treatment on the Concept "Child's School"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Experimental Group before treatment	20	4.230	-8.63	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.915			
Potency	Experimental Group before treatment	20	4.070	-8.13	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.815			
Activity	Experimental Group before treatment	20	4.340	-8.28	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.815			

A comparison was made of the experimental group before and after treatment on the concept "yourself as a parent." Data from this comparison are shown in Table 23. There was a significant difference at the .001 level on all three factors. In all three measures, there was a significant gain between pretest and posttest.

Table 23

Comparison of the Experimental Group Before and After Treatment on the Concept "Yourself as a Parent"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Experimental Group before treatment	20	3.635	-13.24	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.190			
Potency	Experimental Group before treatment	20	3.630	-14.15	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.205			
Activity	Experimental Group before treatment	20	3.030	-15.79	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	5.990			

Data obtained from a comparison of the experimental group on the concept "child" before and after treatment are shown in Table 24. There was a significant difference at the .001 level on all three factors. In all three measures, there was a significant gain between pretest and posttest.

Table 24

Comparison of the Experimental Group Before and After Treatment on the Concept "Child"

Factor	Variable	No. of cases	Mean	t value	df	2-tail probability
Evaluation	Experimental Group before treatment	20	4.175	-12.30	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	6.390			
Potency	Experimental Group before treatment	20	2.830	-9.95	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	5.550			
Activity	Experimental Group before treatment	20	2.635	-8.64	19	0.001
	Experimental Group after treatment	20	5.570			

Tests of the Null Hypotheses

The first null hypothesis, that there would be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group toward the local school in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity, was rejected at the .001 level of significance.

The second null hypothesis, that there would be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group toward themselves as parents in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity, was rejected at the .001 level of significance.

The third null hypothesis, that there would be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control group and the experimental group toward their children in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity, was rejected at the .001 level of significance.

Summary

In this study, the attitudes of parents in the control group and the experimental group were not significantly different before treatment, which indicated that they were drawn from the same population. The two groups were significantly different following treatment with a significant positive change in the attitudes of the experimental group. Comparison of the attitudes of the control group before and after

treatment indicated no significant change, while analysis of the attitudes of the experimental group before and after treatment indicated a positive change significant at the .001 level.

Consistent with research cited in Chapter 2, parents involved in this study participated in the workshops willingly. All subjects had perfect attendance records. Parents demonstrated interest in their children's school performance, and they indicated a desire to become more effective in parenting skills.

The first null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control and the experimental groups toward the school in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity. The *t* values for each, respectively, were -7.41, -7.46, and -9.07. All three *t* values were significant at the .001 level.

The second null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control and the experimental groups toward themselves in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity. The *t* values for each, respectively, were -11.55, -10.24, and -16.24. All three *t* values were significant at the .001 level.

The third null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between the attitudes of the control

and experimental groups toward their children in the three major categories of evaluation, potency, and activity. The *t* values for each, respectively, were -13.87, -9.22, and -10.49. All three *t* values were significant at the .001 level.